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CIA chief assures Bar parley

By HERB JAFFE

DALLAS — Adm. Stansfield Turner, director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), yesterday told the American Bar Association that the U.S. intelligence community is alive and well and is quietly undergoing an overhaul to counteract public criticism of recent years.

Turner said the constraints imposed on intelligence gathering after the Watergate years has resulted in reforms which he said will eventually result in "a new model of intelligence, suited to the goals and ideals of the American people, especially in the delicate area of prosecution vs. disclosure."

The CIA director revealed he has had "a harmonious relationship" with outgoing Attorney General Griffin Bell, both in keeping the Justice Department apprised of CIA activities and in determining when cases of persons involved in espionage activities can be prosecuted without disclosing classified data.

Referring to changes in intelligence gathering, Turner said regulations and oversight "do not weaken us." He explained that oversight of the intelligence system serves as a check against abusive practices by the CIA and 11 other U.S. intelligence gathering agencies.

"The new oversight procedures include the President himself, a special intelligence oversight force that looks into our activities and reports directly to the President, two committees of Congress and the media," which Turner characterized as "more persevering than ever in attempting to find out what we're doing."

Still, he said: "We are faced with constraints in attempting to influence certain world events." On this basis, the CIA has expanded its sphere of influence, he explained, making "foreign policy moves more subtle."

"Our sphere of interest has vastly expanded. We need to be more astute in areas of politics, economics, food needs, population growth, narcotics trafficking, terrorism — and not just military intelligence. This places more demands on us," he added.

Internally, Turner said there is increasing public attention on the CIA since the intelligence investigations of 1975-76. "Those investigations brought more focus than ever on intelligence. They destroyed some support and confidence the public once had in intelligence."

"There has been increasing suspicion of whether intelligence is invading the privacy of individuals. I can tell you it is not," Turner emphasized. "But we have to assure the public of that."

Turner asserted that "a plethora of leaks" in intelligence activities has hurt the CIA, adding that he has proposed a new criminal statute that would make it an offense to disclose the identity of an agent in any intelligence agency. He said the proposed bill is now being reviewed by the Carter Administration and that he is hopeful it will soon be law.

"There is a natural tension involving criminal justice and the safeguard of security," he said. "Sometimes it becomes a dilemma when we are asked to disclose evidence in a prosecution."

"Last winter the attorney general found it necessary, in fact, to abort the prosecution of two individuals from ITT to avoid such a dilemma. It is a dilemma involving law enforcement and the protection of the Constitution in one respect," he said.

He explained that the discovery procedure would make it mandatory to turn over evidence in cases that very often are of a classified nature, although Turner acknowledged that "there is too much classified material and too much classification in government."

"My responsibility in such areas is that the attorney general have all the necessary information. Access should not be a point of concern. The attorney general is entitled to all access."

"If the attorney general decides to prosecute where I disagree, on the basis of national security, then the President must make the decision. I can't frustrate a prosecution, but by the same token a criminal trial in the U.S. is a public event," he added, "demanding all precautions on our part in the use of evidence."

Meanwhile, the CIA has started a "pepped up" advertising campaign to recruit new agents and the results have been "tremendous," an agency spokesman said yesterday.

Suffering from a battered public image after several years of congressional investigations and freedom of information suits, the once supersecret agency has faced a dropoff in recruiting.

But with help from Madison Avenue, the agency has found 4,000 to 5,000 would-be agents in less than a month, a spokesman said.

A New York advertising agency has been directing a sleek new recruiting